

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 196911

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT BEIRUT 4456 SENT ACTION USUN NEW YORK, SECSTATE
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QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4456

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, PORG, UNSC, LE, IS
SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: POSSIBLE SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING

REF: USUN 03092

1. REGRET APPARENT CONFUSION ON SAUNDERS PART AS TO MY MEANING.
ALTHOUGH DO NOT RECALL MY WORDS EXACTLY, WHAT I SAID IN EFFECT
WAS THAT LEBANESE SEEMED BLOCKED ON THE GROUND AND THAT I
EXPECTED THEM TO RESORT TO SECURITY COUNCIL. I SAID I WOULD NOT
BLAME THEM FOR DOING SO, SINCE, IN SPITE OF VERY SERIOUS EFFORT,
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WE HAD SO FAR BEEN UNABLE TO BRING ISRAELIS AROUND, APPARENTLY
BECAUSE OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WEIZMAN ON ONE HAND AND
EYTAN AND BENGAL, DIFFERENCES WHICH SAUNDERS AND AIME HAD
SPELLED OUT FOR ME IN MORE DETAIL THAN WE HAD PREVIOUSLY HAD.

2. I POINTED OUT TO SAUNDERS THAT WE WERE AGAINST GOING
TO SC AND HOPED FOR DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION ON THE GROUND FOR WHICH

WE WERE MAKING MALIANT EFFORTS. IF, HOWEVER, WE WERE NOT RPT NOT ABLE TO GET THE ISRAELIS TO MOVE ON HADDAD ISSUE, THEN I THOUGHT RESORT TO SECURITY COUNCIL BY LEBANESE WAS PROBABLY INEVITABLE.

3. ALSO REGRET THAT WE DID NOT REPORT TELEGRAPHICALLY LAST NIGHT CONVERSATION KINSOLVING AND I HAD WITH SAUNDERS AND JEAN CLAUDE AIME YESTERDAY AFTER AND DURING WHICH TTHIS EXCHANGE OCCURRED BUT CAN ONLY PLEAD PRESS OF BUSINESS. IN BRIEF, AS I TOLD DRAPER ON TELEPHONE, SAUNDERS SAID:

(A) ALTHOUGH WEIZMAN WAS TALKING IN REASONABLE TERMS TO US, THERE WERE OBVIOUS DISAGREEMENTS BETWEEN HIM AND EYTAN AND BENGAL, THE COMMANDERS DIRECTLY CONCERNED ON THE GROUND. LATTER IN PARTICULAR WAS VERY ARROGANT AND WAS OPPOSED TO ENTRY OF LEBANESE TROOPS INTO SOUTH BY WHATEVER ROUTE. HE HAD SENT OFFICERS INTO NAQOURA AND PRESUMABLY OTHER VILLAGES ON MONDAY NIGHT TO TELL INHABITANTS LEBANESE FORCE WAS TOOL OF THEY SYRIANS AND THEY SHOULD RESIST ITS ENTRY. HE HAD ALSO ARROGANTLY ORDERED LT. HOMSI TO LEAVE HIS (HOMSI'S) OWN VILLAGE OF MARJAYOUN. HOMSI TOLD SAUNDERS HE THOUGHT THE EXPLANATION FOR THIS WAS THAT HE HAD BEEN EXPLAINING TO PEOPLE OF MARJAYOUN THAT LEBANESE FORCE WAS NOT UNDER SYRIAN CONTROL.

(B) SAUNDERS SAID LEBANESE WERE CONVINCED, AND HE APPEARED TO SHARE THEIR BELIEF, THAT ISRAELIS WERE BLOCKING MOVEMENT OF
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LEBANESE FORCE THROUGH BUREAUCRATIC DELAYING TACTICS. THEY WERE RAISING ONE OBSTACLE AFTER ANOTHER IN AN EFFORT TO PREVENT PASS-AGE OF ANY TROOPS. SAUNDERS SAID LEBANESE SAW THEMSELVES AS HAVING SEVERAL OPTIONS--ONE WAS TO RETREAT, ANOTHER WAS TO STAY PUT AND WORK FOR DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION AND THIRD WAS TO FIGHT WAY THROUGH.

4. SAUNDERS QUOTED G-2 JOHNNY ABDO AS SAYING HE THOUGHT THERE WAS 80 PERCENT CHANCE OF FORCING WAY THROUGH WITHOUT FACING SERIOUS RESISTANCE OR MAJOR CASUALTIES. I SAID CHANCES OF THEIR DOING SO WERE ABSOLUTELY ZERO IN MY ESTIMATION.

5. SAUNDERS AND AIME WERE PESSIMISTIC THAT ISRAELIS WILL LET FORCE THROUGH AND I HAD IMPRESSION THEY FEEL RECOURSE TO SECURITY COUNCIL IS PROBABLY ONLY COURSE LEFT OPEN TO LEBANESE SINCE ARMY CANNOT REMAIN WHERE IT IS MUCH LONGER IN THEIR VIEW. QUESTION OF HOW LONG ARMY CAN STAY PUT IS INDEED IMPORTANT. I DO NOT HAVE AUTHORITATIVE OPINION ON SUBJECT TO PASS ON, BUT CONTINUED BLOCKADE AND LACK OF ANY PROGRESS IS AN INCREASING EMBARRASSMENT TO GOL. THEY NEED TO FIND SOME WAY -- DRAMATIC OR OTHERWISE-- OUT OF IMPASSE.

6. LEONARD'S REPORT THAT TUENI DOES NOT FAVOR RESORT TO SECURITY COUNCIL IS INTERESTING. HE EXPLAINED TO ME ON WEDNESDAY THAT HE HAD PROPOSED IDEA TO BOUTROS, WHO HAD IN TURN TRIED IT ON ME (BEIRUT 4402). HIS SUGGESTION HAD BEEN NOT THAT LEBANESE PRE-SENT COMPLAINT BUT THAT WALDHEIM DO SO--I.E., THAT WALDHEIM TAKE IT TO SECURITY COUNCIL BECAUSE RESOLUTION 425 WAS BEING BLOCKED BY ISRAELIS. I TOLD HIM WE WOULD PREFER NOT TO GO TO SC, AND HE SEEMED TO AGREE, BUT I HAD IMPRESSION HE WAS SIMPLY TAKING OPEN-MINDED STANCE FOR PURPOSE OF DISCUSSION. HE LEFT ME SOMEWHAT CONFUSED REGARDING HIS REAL STATE OF MIND ON SUBJECT, A CONDITION IN WHICH I FIND MYSELF FREQUENTLY IN THIS COUNTRY. PERHAPS HE, TOO, IS ENGAGED IN TACTICAL TALKING.
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